

E-mail notice sent to all Hospital Data Reporting Contacts on November 30, 2007

**Subject: Place of Occurrence Code E8498**

The purpose of this notification is to address a practice of coding inaccuracy that is an issue at a significant portion of Arizona's hospitals that report discharge data.

As you are all aware, for the last couple of years the Department has audited for the presence of an E code for place of occurrence on injuries by fall. Coders sometimes experience difficulty in assigning these codes, due to a lack of adequate documentation in the record. However, instead of correcting this documentation issue, some hospitals instead implemented a policy of simply placing the code E8499 on any injury by fall record for which they did not have documentation for the place of occurrence. The Department subsequently implemented an audit to identify excessive use of the code E8499, which has resulted in a reduction of the overuse of E8499.

Unfortunately, as use of E8499 has declined, the Department is now observing significant, excessive use of the code E8498. The data submitted to the Department has revealed use of this code at some Arizona hospitals as high as 74% of reported place of occurrence codes.

In speaking with coding professionals outside the Department on this issue, a usage rate for this code of 10% was presented as being reasonable. In the 2007-01 reporting period, 69% of hospitals reporting place of occurrence codes utilized the code E8498 on 15% or less of the records with a place of occurrence code reported. Based on these facts, the Department will implement a threshold for usage of E8498 of 15%, effective with the 2008-01 reporting period (discharges occurring on/after January 1, 2008).

Please be advised that while some hospitals have this issue in both their inpatient and emergency department records, several hospitals have this issue in only one or the other, indicating a discrepancy in policy and/or practice between the two departments. For example, one hospital had a usage rate of 52% in their inpatient records, but only 6% in their emergency department. Specific usage rates of this code during 2007-01 for your hospital are available upon request.

**NOTE:** The text of the original notifications sent to hospitals contained additional information regarding the individual hospitals' status in coding of place of occurrence codes.